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ABSTRACT

If human service personnel are to serve clients effectively, they must understand the condition of human need and the objects of need which satisfy the condition. While definitions of need vary according to academic discipline, a review of literature in ten academic areas revealed that need as a human condition is based upon the existence of particular unmet requirements for well being. Need is constantly in a state of interaction with the needful party's values, health, experience, environment, and other characteristics, and is resolved through a sequence of internal stages. Thus, need is a dynamic process rather than a static condition. Five types of needs (physiological, psychological, social, personal, and integrative) have been identified. Their intensity ranges from survival to inconsequential, and their social scope ranges from individual to societal. If applied in practice, these need concepts and definitions provide means for improving the analysis of human service clientele needs and for enhancing the utilization and effects of program resources. While existing literature characterizes need in several ways, it also highlights the necessity for further investigation of the process by which people perceive their own needs or the indicators that reliably characterize need concepts. (MN)

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UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NEED: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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Preface

This paper was developed to give human service professionals more insight and clarity in their analysis of human needfulness. That in turn would help them develop a more informed rationale for decision making as they plan service programs. Most if not all human service professionals seek to serve the needs of their constituency, regardless of whether the professional area is education, health, or law. Although the intention is clear, the central concept is not--"need" is a fuzzy idea capable of being (mis-)interpreted many ways.

Of all the words used commonly in professional languages, need is one of the most value-leaden yet least explicit terms. It is good if not mandatory to attend to clientele needs. It is important to base the allocation of resources upon needs assessments. It is urgent that the most needful populations be served first. But what are needs? Can needs be equated with opinions elicited on a survey? Can need actually be interpreted from any kind of indicator or evidence? Need really is a fuzzy concept.

The power with which a concept can be used to explain a complex condition depends upon how thoroughly and clearly the concept itself is explained. When a term such as need is defined entirely from the viewpoint (bias?) of a particular area of practice (e.g., sociology, education, marketing, or psychology), the usefulness of that term is restricted--or filtered, if you will--by the selective perception of that viewpoint. A more universal conception of the term provides a foundation for building and applying more powerful (i.e., more accurate, measurable, effective, and practical) operational definitions in each field of practice.

The basic strategies employed in this paper are first to examine the condition of human need carefully and then to consider the objects of need which hopefully satisfy the condition. It is believed that one of the reasons why needs assessments are seldom more useful than arbitrary or random guesses is that the observer often takes great interpretative (intuitive?) leaps in the judgement of internal conditions from external behaviors. This paper provides a detailed examination of many of the conditions and processes thought to occur within persons having need (namely, all of us). An examination of observable behaviors, opinions, etc. then may lead to a more powerful explanation of a given client's or group's needfulness. In essence, a new understanding of need should strengthen the sometimes questionable linkage between needs and service.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NEEDS: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

J. Nevin Robbins

Both philosophy and legislation influence educators and other human service professionals to address the needs of the population. However, the task of serving human needs is far more complex to achieve than to mandate. Despite their importance, human needs are difficult to understand, measure, and interpret. The idea of needfulness is often treated as an oversimplified notion of goals or discrepancies from the ideal. Such simplicity can prevent practitioners and researchers alike from dealing successfully with the essence of unacceptable human conditions.

It was the goal of this research to provide researchers and human service practitioners with useful explanations of how human needs may better be understood. The explanations which follow result from a synthesis of explanations and theoretical constructs found in diverse sources of literature. Because this paper is a synthesis, some relationships among key concepts are apparently original to this work. Constructive criticism about the interpretations and explanations contained herein are welcome.

The research is based upon a review of literature in ten academic areas (psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, educational psychology, education, adult education, motivational research, consumer motivation, and marketing). Explicit definitions of "need" were sought, as well as descriptions of related concepts. An amazing variety of viewpoints and terminology was discovered. The principle tasks of the research were seeking basic meaning in the explanations (despite the terminology) and organizing the concepts into logical relationships.

Each area of literature exhibited a characteristic emphasis. Most disciplines based their conceptual framework on psychological findings and constructs, which treat need as a highly individualistic and primarily internal matter. Although non-psychology areas used psychological terminology the terms were applied differently to reflect the emphases of these areas.

In psychology, the emphasis is upon inferred internal stresses and forces, such as tensions, drives, and motives. Psychology-allied academic areas link internal conditions to overt behavioral characteristics. In social psychology, the emphasis is upon how need-induced tension leads to individual and group action. In motivational research and consumer motivation literature, needs orient behavior toward goals.

In academic areas which address observable human activity, the concept of need is defined more practically. In sociology and anthropology, needs are

important to the setting of problem-solving goals. In marketing, needs reflect the conditions which affect the quality of life. In education, educational psychology, and adult education, needs generally seem to be those things which are thought to be needed or the deficiencies which are to be overcome.

Throughout the literature analysis, it became important to differentiate carefully between two terms, "need" and "needs." Need, or more accurately "needfulness," is typically an unacceptable condition within us which prompts some action in response to that condition. For example, conditions of malnutition, loneliness, or excitement may stimulate action on our part or on the part of others concerned for us. Needs are both tangible and intangible things which hopefully satisfy the needful condition. Needs may include drink, shelter, friendship, sight, information, decisions, relief, or exercise. This differentiation between need and needs is necessary for a clear analysis. We must keep in mind that although the analysis brings new in-depth clarity to the component parts of complex processes, the application of that analysis must reflect the actual interrelated nature of the concepts.

The following three sections present the findings of this research. In Conditions of Need, three basic qualities of human needfulness are presented. In Dynamics of Need, the processes of need development and resolution are explored. In Dimensions of Need, four typologies are given for the measurement and analysis of need. The final section presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research and improved practice.

CONDITIONS OF NEED

The literature reveals three conditions under which human need can most accurately be understood. These conditions are bases from which the dynamics of need-related processes and the analytical dimensions of needfulness are developed. First, a state of needfulness is dependent upon the existance of some type of requirement that is not adequately being met. Second, the state of need exists as an internal condition within the person. Third, a condition of need exists in interaction with the personal and social qualities of life.

Requirements as a Basis for Need

It is understood, and rightly so, I believe, that people are physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual beings who grow through the meeting of certain physical, social, and spiritual requirements. That is, it is a basic condition of life that certain requirements must be met. Physiologically, each person must ingest certain energy giving materials and must perform certain

bodily processes. These requirements are factual; how these requirements come into being and how they are manifest through human behaviors is the subject of much inquiry.

Many requirements for survival and well being are innate--resulting from one's genetic characteristics. Nutritional requirements are linked closely to metabolism and physical development. Other requirements are learned through social and cultural interaction or experiences of success and failure.

Need as an Internal Condition

It appears that need is a state or condition within the individual which leads to other states of being or behaviors. Regardless of whether need is prompted by external or internal forces, the state of need remains internal. These internal conditions of need are expressed through a series of mental and/or physical behaviors or processes. Need supposedly could be defined as an external requirement or goal imposed on the individual from elements in that individual's environment. External requirements or goals, however, should be considered just that--external requirements or goals. Need can be influenced or perhaps brought about by environmental stimuli, but from an individual's standpoint, the stimuli are not the same as needs until they are somehow internalized as acceptable or legitimate requirements.

Most definitions recognize need as an internal condition which motivates a person to obtain satisfaction through attaining goals. As one considers the needful condition and the need satisfying process, it seems that each definition of need takes one of three general emphases: (1) One type of definition treats needs as deficiencies, emphasizing that which is lacking or in too short supply. Deficiencies then motivate the person toward behavior to fill the "gap." (2) Another type of definition treats need as a motivating force, emphasizing the energy and tensions which result from deficiencies. Motivating forces then arouse the person toward goal attaining behavior. (3) A third type of definition treats need as expectancies, emphasizing the goals (objects, actions, behavior, or states of being) that are to be attained. These emphases are illustrated in the three definitions that follow:

(Deficiency) Need: The condition of lacking, wanting, or requiring something which if present would benefit the organisum by facilitating behavior or satisfying a tension. (Wolman, 1973, p. 250)

(Motivating Force) Unsatisfied human needs, with their resulting tension inside the organism, serve as motives to arouse and direct behavior toward goals which the individual perceives as satisfying the need and thereby reducing the tension. (Klausmeier & Goodwin, 1966, p. 425)

(Expectancy) Needs. A condition or situation in which something necessary or desirable is required or wanted. (Houle, 1974, p. 233)

If need is indeed internal as these definitions assert, then it cannot be observed directly but must be inferred or interpreted from conditions or behaviors which are observable. The difficulty of accurate observation and interpretation obviously are great, even if we are interpreting our own conditions of needfulness. Although a person may certainly be aware of needfulness, that person still must interpret feelings, drives or goals in order to understand the need.

Need as a State of Interaction

Needfulness is a condition which is heavily influenced by the condition and circumstances of the person having need. Except for analytical purposes, need is not an entity independent of a person's values, health, experience, environment, and other characteristics. It must be recognized that needfulness interacts constantly with all aspects of one's multifaceted existance.

The nature of our needs changes as we participate in events in our environment and as we contend with our own complex nature. As we grow and change through life experiences, our needs are heavily influenced by personal and environmental factors. Some needs are even influenced by other needs, resulting in sensations of high motivation or internal conflict, for example. If such interaction is not recognized as real life needs are dealt with, faulty inferences or deductions may result.

Summary. To understand fully the complex nature of human needs, three major aspects of needfulness should be recognized. First, needfulness is based upon the existance of different types of requirements. Some requirements are innate as part of our biological composition; other requirements are developed through learning. Second, need exists as an internal condition regardless of how it was stimulated into existance or recognized. As an internal condition, need can be identified only indirectly through inferences. Needs are frequently characterized in terms of deficiencies, motivating forces, or expectancies. Third, needfulness is a condition in constant interaction with all characteristics of life, including environment, self, and other needs. Given these conditions for understanding human need, it is appropriate to examine the processes of resolving needfulness.

DYNAMICS OF NEED

A condition of needfulness is not only a complex phenomenon within the human system but also an active sequence of events and changes. The need resolution process begins with the existence of requirements as described earlier and progresses through a number of hypothesized stages until some goal-related action takes place. Throughout all stages, learning influences the character of each stage and the extent to which resolution is sought. The process operates in a cycle as the meeting of one set of needs facilitates efforts to resolve other needs.

Need Resolution Process

The resolution of human needs is believed to be a far more complex process than simple goal-seeking behavior. A series of stages have been hypothesized to explain many of the conditions and sensations that occur as we experience need. Since need is internal, its explanation must be inferred from observable factors. Psychologist Henry A. Murray acknowledged how need is explained abstractly in the mind of the observer when he stated, "A need is a hypothecical process the occurrence of which is imagined in order to account for certain objective and subjective facts," (Woodruff, 1951, p. 19).

Despite its level of abstraction, the need resolution process is comprised of a number of concrete conditions and events. Developed principally in the area of psychology, these constructs are linked here in a logical progression. It should be noted that all discussion is predicated upon the conditions of need which were examined earlier. It is presumed that requirements relevant to a subject need have been established, as it is presumed that need is an internal condition. It is understood that the need process interacts constantly with other characteristics of the person having need. However, for the sake of analysis, each stage of the process is treated initially as a separate step.

The six stages of the need resolution process are depicted in Figure 1. Two of the stages, Drive and Motive, are grouped together under a common heading, Motivation.

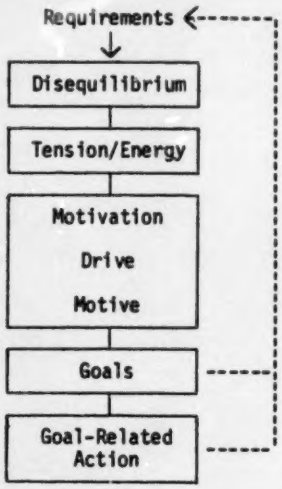

Figure 1. Need Resolution Process

Stage 1: Disequilibrium

Given that each person has a complex set of requirements for survivial, well-being, and growth, an inability to meet those requirements causes some disruption in the normal processes of living. Regardless of whether an individual is deficient in that which is required or has developed an expectancy for more of that which is required, the individual's system is put in a state of inbalance — an unacceptable condition.

It is this condition of disequilbrium between requirements and status that initiates a condition of need. The state of disequilibrium, being an unacceptable condition, stimulates a sense of tension within the person, as described in the second stage.

Stage 2: Tension/Energy

The human system reacts to a state of disequilibrium and develops a state of tension vis-vis the unmet requirement. Along with this tension develops some extent of energy which can later be directed toward efforts to meet the requirements. The association of energy with tension may be more easily understood through the analogy of a compressed coil-type spring. As more tension is put into the compression or squeezing of the spring, increasing amounts of energy become apparent and stored in the spring. As tension develops within a person, energy develops likewise.

Tension, in one sense, is undesirable. If one believes that a person should always maintain a constant balance or equilibrium, the tension must be resolved in order to restore balance to the system. This view is illustrated by Tyler's

(1975) review of the psychological writings of Prescott, Murray, and others.

> They [Prescott, Murray, and others] view a human being as a dynamic organism, an energy system normally in equilibrium between internal forces produced by the energy of the oxidation of food and external conditions. To keep the system in equilibrium it is necessary that certain 'needs' be met. That is, certain tensions are produced which result in disequilibrium unless these tensions are relieved. In this sense, every organism is continually meeting its needs, that is, reacting in such a way as to relieve these forces that bring about imbalance. (pp. 6-7)

Tension, on the other hand, may be desirable if it instigates behavior which promotes growth in the organism. "It is by the resolving of tensions that a man develops his life capacities. Kretch and Crutchfield recognize this when they say, 'Most blockages can, as a matter of fact, be regarded as beneficial and adaptive, for they energize the individual's efforts toward achievement of his goals and cause him to reorient, learn, and grow'" (Rowan, 1973, p. 74). The resolution of tension serves not only to restore balance but also to increase the person's realization of potential. Regardless of whether tension is valued as desirable, the reduction of tension toward one end or another becomes necessary. Under these conditions, a hypothesized internal activity develops: drive.

Stage 3: Drive

It is thought that the energy associated with the tension is collected as a requirement-related, activating force. When Woodruff (1951) discusses the physiological, social, and personal realms of need, he characterizes the nature of drives.

> Each of these three systems of need is capable of exerting a dynamic effect on the individual . . . A lack of any essential element places the individual in disequilibrium, and looses within him a restless drive that sends him into a search for adjustment. (pp. 91-92)

Drive represents the concentration of tension-derived energy into an action-oriented force. "Behavior is 'driven' with increasing vigor as the tension that is characteristic of a drive (hunger, thirst) becomes more accute" (Newcomb, Turner, & Converse, 1965, p. 23). Drive is not oriented toward any particular action or goal other than the reduction of tension. It is the first step towards a particular action or goal because it induces some kind of goal oriented behavior to occur. In a physical science analogy, drive is the force that overcomes enough inertia to get the ball rolling. The direction of the ball or the goal-orientation of the behavior is determined not by drive, but by a succeeding hypothetical construct, motive

Stage 4: Motive

Motives serve as the link between directionless internal drives and the goal-oriented actions which satisfy those drives. While the theoretical construct of drive only excites the person enought to do something, motivation mobilizes that energy, channeling behavior toward some condition, object, or activity that supposedly relieves the tension. Motive is essentially a concept which joins together a state of energy mobilization and a goal (Newcomb et al., 1965, p. 22).

Needs and motives are closely related psychological constructs. It is difficult to imagine one concept without the other. A need without some degree of energy direction (motivation) and goal orientation would hardly be needing. Motivation without some requirement-tension system force (need) behind it could hardly be motivating. It is no wonder that one construct is often defined in terms of the other:

> Motives are expressions of a person's needs. (Davis, 1967, p.22)

> Unsatisfied human needs, with their resulting tension inside the organism, serve as motives to arouse and direct behavior toward goals which the individual perceives as satisfying the need and thereby reducing the tension. (Klausmeier & Goodwin, 1966, p. 425)

Should "need" and "motive" or need-concepts and motive concepts be used interchangeably? Some writers treat them as the same. For example, Howard and Sheth (1969) examined buyer behavior and decided that:

> 'Motive,' 'goal,' 'need,' 'drive,' and 'want' will be used interchangeably here—even though these terms tend to be used in slightly different ways in the psychological literature—because treating them as synonyms facilitates discussion and does not result in serious ambiguity. (p. 99)

Despite the often confusing language, a basic concept is being addressed--the motivation of a person from a state of tension toward the attainment of a (supposedly) requirement-satisfying goal. To clarify the Need Resolution Process, the third and fourth stages, Drive and Motive, have been combined into a more explanetory stage, Motivation.

Motivation Stage: Combining Drive and Motive

The drive-motive steps may be condensed into a single stage, Motivation. Newcomb, et al. (1965) provide a suitable rationale for this when they summarize their findings: "Motive, then, is a concept that joins together a state of energy mobilization and a goal" (p. 22). This generalization provides a more practical concept as was found necessary when Berelson and Steiner (1964) reported on research on human behavior. They used motivation as an encompassing term:

> Motivation: The general term we'll use to refer to all those inner striving conditions described as wishes, desires, needs, drives, and the like. Theoretical distinctions are often maintained among these more specific lables, but for our purposes, the more general notion is adequate. (p. 239)

Stage 5: Goals

Given a drive toward action, the selection of an appropriately satisfying goal—be it a behavior, an object, or a condition—is critically linked to the motivation stage. Berelson and Steiner (1964) define goals as the "object, condition, or activity toward which the motive is directed; in short, that which will satisfy or reduce the striving" (p. 242). The goals sought may be overt behavior such as speech or movement, objects such as consumer goods, or internal conditions (states of being) such as relief or satisfaction. Whatever type of goal is selected, the major concern is how well the goal satisfies the need as initiated by the requirement.

Stage 6: Goal-Related Action

The natural consequence of motivation and goal selection is some form of action. The type of action will be closely related to the type of goal sought. When the goal is a tangible object such as a mink coat, a promotion, a television repair, or a certificate of completion, the action will be predominately overt behavior. If the goal itself is behavior, such as jogging, debating, or hugging, then the type of action also is predominantly overt behavior.

Should the goal be the attainment of a different internal condition (state of being) such as peace of mind or a decision, the action might be predominately "covert behavior," (i.e., the action takes place within a person as a series of intellectual or emotional processes.).

The action taken to accomplish any goal or set of goals will probably involve a combination of overt and covert behaviors. Overt discussions with friends may preceed a decision. Getting "psyched up" may precede a period of intense activity. Whatever approach(es) seem to be most successful will probably be pursued.

Cycle and Recycle

The completion of goal-related actions is intended to bring satisfying relief to the state of tension. The extent of satisfaction is determined by comparing goal attainment outcomes with requirements, as indicated by the dotted line in Figure 1. Two circumstances should now be examined—first, where goals are attained, and second, where goals are not attained.

Consider now the alternative circumstance where the requirement has been met. Does the person sit stupefied in a state of satiation? Quite the

opposite usually occurs (except for temporary satiation from over-indulgence). Lindeman (1926) describes the result almost poetically, "Each need satisfied releases energies which flow into channels of renewed discontent" (p. 149).

Within the channels of the need resolution process, surplus energy from satisfied requirements cause a condition of imbalance or disequilibrium similar to that resulting from unmet requirements. New forces are set in motion. The satisfaction of motives normally releases the individual to search for satisfaction of other previously subordinated drives and aspirations (Wasson & McConaughy, 1968, p. 33).

The satisfaction of needs allows--even stimulates---each person to cycle again through the need resolution process in pursuit of other needs. Maslow (1970) sees the satisfaction of needs as an ongoing life process.

> Man is a wanting animal and rarely reaches a state of complete satisfaction except for a short time. As one desire is satisfied, another pops up to take its place. When this is satisfied, still another comes into the foreground, etc. It is characteristic of the human being throughtout his whole life that he is practically always desiring something. (p. 24)

The manner in which the cycle is repeated depends upon how well the requirements were met. If the outcome of goal attainment was not totally satisfying but adequate to reduce tension, system stability should return. If the outcome does satisfy the dominant requirement, the energy once consumed by drive becomes available to facilitate the meeting of other requirements. This management of tension allows the attainment of "growth" goals (that is, goals beyond those of the original requirement).

Alternatively, when requirements are not adequately met, the system "recycles" for a revised approach. Tension may increase through the onset of frustration, drives may be further stimulated, new goals may be selected, or different types of action may be attempted. Should no satisfaction be possible, disequilibrium may become an accepted fact or attention may be shifted away from the needful condition as much as possible. In any case, for the needful person, some aspect of the process is affected when goals are not attained.

The cyclic character of the need resolution process is depicted in Figure 2. Several stages in the process indicate their constituent attributes discussed earlier. For example, the three types of goals (objects, behaviors, and conditions) are identified with that stage. Dotted lines indicate how the system typically cycles from one stage to another.

Although the satisfaction of needs has been discussed primarily as a linear progression of stages, it actually is a mixture of stages, processes, and circumstances. Several requirements or drives may be competing for satisfaction. Requirements and motives or goals may be on different levels of specificity. Some needs may contribute to the satisfaction of other needs or may conflict with them. This "overlapping" of needful conditions is important to recognize in the analysis of human need.

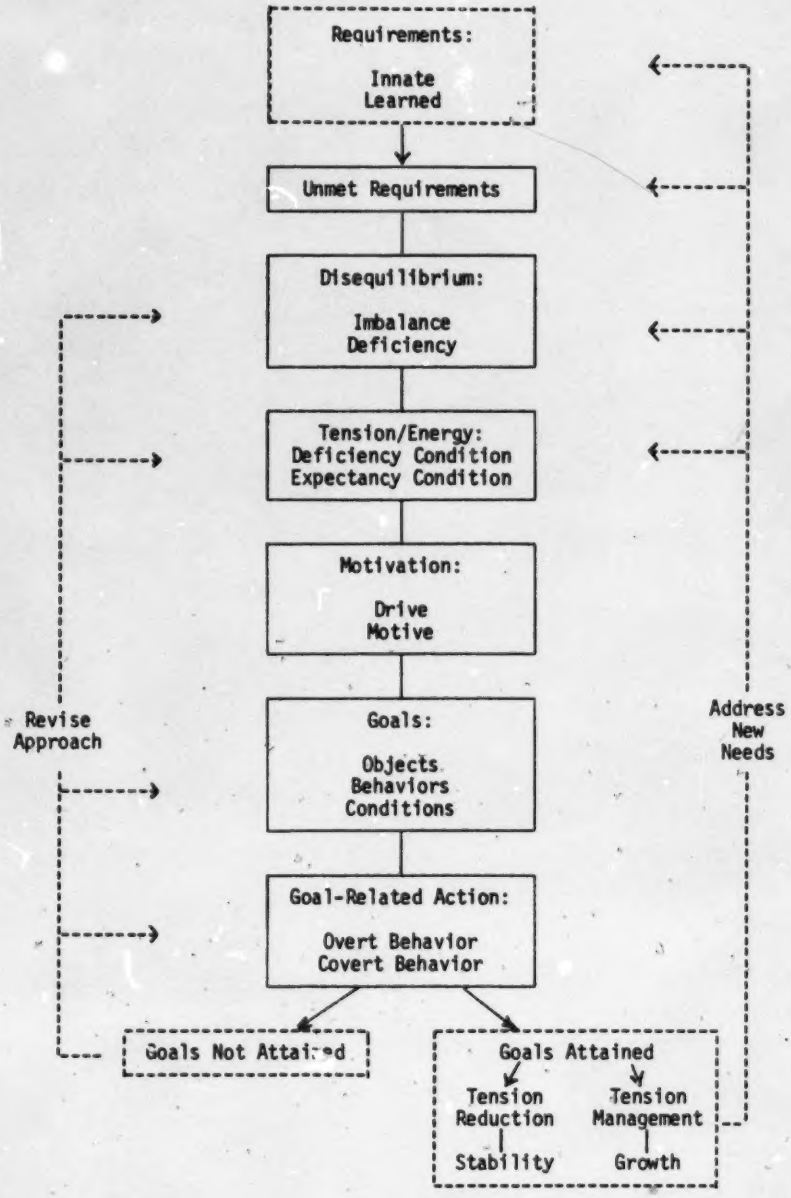

Figure 2. Need Satisfaction Cycle

Contribution of Learning

As a person develops and matures in any culture, the family and society anticipate (and perhaps stimulate) many of the person's needs and provide or indicate acceptable satisfying experiences. Whether the person is led to the experiences subtly or through overt instruction, the degree to which experience satisfy need-related tensions are learned by the person. Learning becomes a means of identifying the most satisfying experiences or goals and thus is an integral element of the need resolution process.

Learning serves many functions. It not only facilitates goal finding and selection, it can stimulate a state of need as well. Although need is an internal state, it can be brought about by events in each person's environment. Through purposeful or incidental learning, one can become cognizant of and internalize external requirements every bit as strong as those that are innate. Learned needs are often termed secondary motives—"secondary" because they are induced by the person's interaction with his environment and not by the biological self, and "motives" because they are goal oriented from the beginning. The more a person learns and the greater that person's capacity is to retain and apply what he learns, the more complex and environment-oriented his needs become.

Each stage of the need resolution process is affected by current and previous learning. Requirements may become established through conditioning. As means of satisfaction are identified through experience, requirements become defined in terms of those means. One also learns to recognize and interpret senses of tension and to direct or stimulate one's level of energy. Through learning to anticipate, one's expectancies may increase the level of tension. Learning is central to motivation as alternatives are reviewed, goals are selected, and energy is mobilized toward the goal. It is common to learn to identify and control multiple motives—suppressing some and activating others. The selection of goals requires not only an awareness of alternatives but also an understanding of the means and outcomes of attaining them. The nature of the goal-related action is determined by learning and experience as well as by opportunity. One learns to achieve a satisfactory balance among multiple needs, motivations, goals, and behaviors. One also learns to determine whether the need was actually satisfied. The contribution of learning, then, is pervasive throughout the entirety of the needs satisfaction cycle.

Summary. The effect of our ability to learn and resolve needs gives life a distinct richness but complicates our attempt to understand human needfulness. "Analysis of behavior would be simple if a person's behavior at a given time were the result of one motive and one alone, but this is seldom the case. Motives of all types and intensities influence one another to accomplish a particular motivation" (Davis, 1967, p. 23). To help us sort through observable behaviors and inferred conditions, the need satisfaction cycle serves as a framework for the analysis of human needs. Beginnning with a state of dis-

equilibrium because of unmet requirements, the need resolution process proceeds through stages of tension/energy, motivation (drives and motives), goals, and goal-related action. Depending upon how well goals are attained and requirements are met, the process may go through cycles of additional or new need resolution stages. Throughout all stages, learning provides a strong influence on how conditions are developed, perceived, and handled. Three common results of attempts to satisfy needs include continued disequilibrium, stability, or growth.

DIMENSIONS OF NEED

The literature provided information not only on the process of need satisfaction but also on the general nature of needfulness. Each field contributed its perception of human need with frequent emphsis on the motivational aspect. Many need and motive concepts appear to fit into certain natural groupings. The groupings or "families" of concepts become the basis for the four major dimensions of the concept of need. As each dimension is examined, related concepts will be presented and discussed summarily.

The first dimension to be presented characterizes the source of typical needs. The sources may be internal as in the case of physiological needs, or external, as in the case of cultural or economic needs. The second dimension identifies five types of need: physiological, psychological, social, personal, and integrative. The third dimension considers the intensity that needs may have, ranging from basic needs for physical or emotional survival to incidental needs for the satisfaction of curiosity. The fourth dimension reviews the social scope of needs, varying from individual needs to group, organizational, community, and societal needs.

Sources of Need

The source of need is that circumstance from which the conditions of need originate. Previously, we determined that the basic condition of needfulness is the requirement or necessity for particular states of being or action. The source of the requirement, then, is essentially the source of the need.

We also determined that need is internal to the being (individual, group, or society) possessing it. Likewise, the requirement which serves as a basis for need must also be internal. The requirement must not necessarily have originated within the being, however. Such a limitation would not recognize the complex interaction people have with their physical and social environments.

It would be useful when characterizing the sources of need to examine how an individual functions within environmental conditions. Figure 3 illustrates

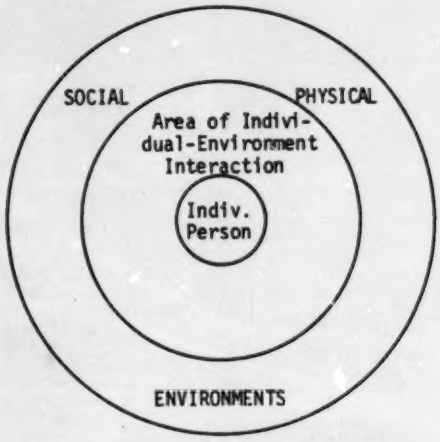

Figure 3. The Individual in Relation to the Environment.

the relationship between an individual and the physical and social environments.

The three concentric circles represent the individual, the overall environment, and the individual's immediate environment. The inner circle represents the individual as a physical and intellectual being. The outer circle encompasses all those parts of the social and physical environments which might affect the individual. This environment would include other persons, institutions, and the forces of nature, for example. The middle ring defines that part of the environment with which the individual can interact and affect the nature of the forces in effect, such as those at home, at work, or in the community.

The internal sources of requirements are each person's innate or inborn characteristics. The characteristics present in the genetic structure define certain requirements for the survival and growth of the individual. One's physiology and the natural developmental process cause changing requirements for organismic growth. The existance of intelligence determines individual requirements for mental activity, although these requirements may not be manifest until some time after birth. Many internal forces stimulate the condition of need have been discussed in preceding sections: needs or motives based on deficiencies, discrepancies, dissatisfaction, disequilibrium, tension, and energy. Additional internal forces identified in the literature include the person's tendencies or predispositions to behave in certain ways. Each person's potentiality—or the tendency to achieve one's potentiality—are also considered to stimulate needfulness. Alone or jointly, all these internal factors can affect each person's state of need.

Interaction with forces in the environment can also stimulate needs. Needs which are identified in the literature as resulting from interaction forces include: (a) experientially acquired needs that are developed through cultural experiences (McDonald, 1959, pp. 84-85); (b) developmental taks needs that are based on maturation, cultural processes, and social action (Havighurst & Orr, 1965); (c) problematic situation needs that are based on the individual's

interaction with societal problems (Williams, 1971, p. 59); (d) expectancy motivation that associates anticipated outcomes with affective experiences (McClelland & Winter, 1969, p. 43); and discrepancy needs that are based on the (non-) attainment of aspirations (Triandis, 1971, p. 239).

External sources of requirements are found in each person's environment. The individual is subjected to many unchangeable and externally imposed pressures urging particular types of behavior. Some pressures may be subtle (e.g., soft-sell advertising); some may be substantial (e.g., criminal and civil laws). The requirements originating externally to the person are derived from the social, cultural, economic, religious, governmental, and other systems in the environment. Rules, norms, values, goals, and other types of expectations are transmitted to each person through socialization, experience, observation, and other means of learning. The many types of physical environment forces such as climate, terrain, buildings, and machinery can obviously stimulate different types of human needs. Each individual perceives and reacts to many forces. Only when the environmental forces are internalized (i.e., accepted, believed, or followed do they become sources of need. Once internalized, the requirements and hence the needs may be indistinguishable in intensity and effect from requirements based on internal requirements. The degree of needfulness is determined by the degree to which the requirements are not met, regardless of the source of the requirement or needs.

Types of Need

The literature is lush with concepts denoting different types of need. Many writers have their own system for classifying needs (e.g., Maslow, Murray, Prescott, Lewin, Herzberg, and others). Some classify needs by the internal condition that is stimulated, some by the assumed effects of satisfying or not satisfying the need, and some by the behavior-oriented goals which supposedly will satisfy the needs. Although the writers' terminologies vary, each term, concept, or definition does highlight a particular type or class of needs. The concepts have been organized into the five types of needs presented below. Excluded from this discussion are those "needs" which are defined solely in terms of particular tangible goals. Such goals as high grades, money, or a new car may very well be needed, but they are not needs themselves; they are simply the goals.

The five types of needs (i.e., "families" of need and motive concepts) are (a) physiological needs, (b) psychological needs, (c) social needs, (d) personal needs, and (e) integrative needs. Although each type of need is generally different than the others, the types are not necessarily independent of the others. Some social needs, for example, may affect the manner in which physiological needs may be satisfied.

Physiological needs.

Many needs serve to maintain the existance and quality of physical or biological life. The principle terms used to identify these life-sustaining

needs are biogenic, physical, physiological, sensory, vegetative, and visceral needs. Generally, physiological needs are based on the biological or genetic structure of the organism and are comprised of the physical and chemical conditions which make life possible. The needs represent the requirements necessary for the physical well-being of the invididual or species. The indicators of need and some usual goal-objects cited frequently in the literature include: hunger—food; thirst—water; nutrition—minerals, vitamins, etc.; reproduction—sex; and basic body functions—activity, sleep, body temperature, air, elimination, and homeostasis.

Psychological needs.

Some needs are closely associated with the existance of the human mind and its application of intelligence. Some writers consider the needs to be "psychogenic"--i.e., originating in the mind (Klausmeier & Goodwin, 1966, p. 432)--while other writers consider needs to be socially derived through the learning ability of intelligence (Bell, 1972, p. 251; Berelson & Steiner, 1967, pp. 159-160). The existance and use of intelligence may explain what Klausmeier and Goodwin call exploratory, manipulation, and curiosity needs (1966, p. 429). Psychological needs are needs of the mind (e.g., for affection, ego-bolstering, and ego-defense), but may be associated with or instrumental to other types of need.

Social needs.

Social needs are the result of environmental contacts with other persons. These are learned through social interaction and are influencial in determining how each person relates to elements (e.g., persons, institutions, and systems) in the social environment. Social needs could include such needs as for recognition, status, esteem, affection, belonging, affiliation, independence, achievement, power, and self-respect. They stem from cultural, moral, and religious norms, societal values, expectations of others, and the development of social roles and maturity.

Most of the need concepts from most writers would fit within the above three classifications: physiological, psychological, and social needs. Some additional writers (Newcomb, Prescott, and Woodruff) have, however, differentiated some other types of need and motive concepts from some psychological and social needs. The addition of two additional types of needs--personal and integrative--represents an important recognition of man's complex character.

Personal needs.

Where social needs influence the way in which man relates to those persons and things in his environment, personal needs influence the way in which man relates to himself. Newcomb considers personal needs to be socially derived but privately maintained, perhaps through ideals or other personal standards (Viteles, 1953, p. 72). Other authors emphasize the individual's comprehension of his or her physical and intellectual self through experience and self-perception and expression.

Integrative needs.

Individuals and certainly societies often have need to adjust to philosophical ideas and other forces beyond themselves and their environments. At a societal level, the world's religions are manifestations of almost universal needs to relate to spiritual forces. At an individual level, persons relate themselves to their beliefs and the philosophies and beliefs of others. Through meeting integrative needs, a person can find an acceptable psychological balance between self, reality, and values.

Intensity of Need

Of all the concepts regarding need, perhaps the least well developed are those denoting the strength or urgency of need. Three terms, "basic," "primary," and "secondary," are frequently attached to "need" and "motive" to imply values of importance or intensity. The terms represent, in overgeneralized fashion, the necessity of fulfilling a need or motive.

When a need is labled basic or primary, it is considered necessary for the survival of the organism or species and arises from the basic physiology of life. That is, basic and primary needs sustain biological life functions. Secondary needs usually indicate non-biological needs which are derived from the environment. Davis (1967) says that secondary needs are developed through experience and learning (pp. 22-23). Generally, secondary needs are those needs which are not considered critical to the survival of the individual or the species.

Few other terms are substituted for basic, primary, and secondary needs. The few exceptions are used synonomously. Galbraith (1958) talks of "absolute human needs;" Wasson and McConaughy (1968) speak of "primary and innate drives;" and Olds (1955) writes of "survival requirements." Secondary motives were occasionally termed "derived motives" (Viteles, 1953) or "learned motives" (Berelson & Steiner, 1964, 1967). These few concepts are almost universal in use, occasionallyincorrect in meaning, and often inadequate in explanation.

The correctness of meaning can certainly be questioned. Many biological requirements are certainly necessary for survival and are appropriately considered basic or primary. However, to limit "basic" needs to physiological ones is to ignore the reality of many social forces in different cultures. A great many learned needs are as basic to life as biological needs may be. Failing to meet the needs may not automatically cause the death of the person, as starvation might, but may result in death never-the-less. As examples, consider religious or military martyrs whose values meant more than life itself or primitive tribal wives who simply stop living after the deaths of their husbands. Who is to say that some psychological, social, personal, or integrative needs may not be as necessary as physiological ones? The intensity of and interaction among the different types of needs are discussed in Davis' review of research on human motivation:

> Although human needs have been classified as primary or secondary, this is for purposes of discussion only. In a particular human being they are inseparable. The state of the physical body affects the mind, and the state of mind can affect the physical body. In fact, medical research shows that body chemistry (a physical condition) affects the emotions and feelings. (p. 24)

Although many theories of need do not provide intensity-denoting language, the intensity of needfulness ("potency") plays an important role in how needs are thought to be satisfied. Maslow developed a widely accepted theory of motivation which not only classified types of basic human needs but also describes the process by which the needs may be satisfied.

Maslow (1970) maintains that "the human being is never satisfied, except in a relative or one-step-along-the-path fashion, and . . . that wants seem to arrange themselves in some sort of hierarchy of prepotency . . . . The probability of any one desire emerging into consciousness depends upon the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other prepotent desires" (p. 25). He goes on to explain that when a most basic need (e.g., hunger) is satisfied, "at once other (and higher) needs emerge and these, rather than the physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency" (p. 38).

Although no standard terminology has been established, the concept of intensity is clear. Intensity of need should be characterized entirely independent of other dimensions of need, particularly type of need. The existance of a hierarchy of needs does not in and of itself predict what type of need will be the most potent in a given circumstance.

To characterize the potency or urgency of needs, a continuum should be utilized. At one extreme, need should be considered basic. Failure to attend to basic needs would result in serious damage, perhaps even desturction, of the individual. Basic needs should not be limited to physiological conditions only. One's emotional or mental health may be jeopardized as seriously as one's physical condition. At the other extreme, a need should be considered incidental. Failure to attend to such needs is actually quite inconsequential. These needs are only peripheral or marginal to an individual's qualtiy of existance. Throughout the continuum, needs would be characterized best by comparing their potency and ranking them accordingly on a case-by-case basis.

Social Scope of Need

The final dimension of need is the scope or extent to which the need exists within a population. Need exists, or course on an individual level. As discussed under "Conditions of Need," need can also exist among groups of individuals and even among societies.

Need is internal to the "organism" or "being" having it. In most cases, the being is an individual person. Most literature and almost all of this paper discuss need as an individual condition. An organism can be more than an individual, however; it can be a collectivity of individuals if that collectivity functions systematically like the internal elements of an individual organism. Collectivities can then internalize and maintain various requirements for certain qualities of existance, growth, and activity. If the collectivity exhibits human organismic traits, it certainly may have needs regardless of its size. The collectivity may then be a group, an institution, a community, or a society in its scope.

Particular needs may exist at each level of scope. It would be as proper to discuss community or societal needs for economic stability, for example, as to discuss an individual's need for economic sufficiency. The processes of need creation and satisfaction would be the same or at least similar at all levels. The types of needs might change from level to level or there might be analogous needs among the levels (e.g., an individual's need for physiological homeostasis and a society's need for social order).

If we consider the system of all individuals and their relationships, dynamics, etc. in a society to be analogous to the system of biological and psychological elements in an individual person, we could utilize a unitary view when considering societal needs. Societal needs, like individual needs, become needs as such only when (societally) internal conditions of need are present. Again, external forces may influence the development of awareness of needs, but those forces are not themselves needs.

Summary. The inductive analysis of numerous need-related concepts from diverse fields of study resulted in the development of four typologies for characterizing human need. The explanations presented along the four different dimensions provide practical guidelines to complement an analysis of the need resolution process. Sources of need identified both internal and environmental stimuli for the creation or modification of need-related requirements. Types of need established five classifications of need based on the biological, suggested an analytical method for characterizing the strength of needs. Social scope of need extended the application of need concepts from an individual person level to systematically functioning groups of any size. Used conjunctively, the several aspects of need should facilitate a better understanding of a particular needful circumstance and a better attempt to satisfy it.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The concept of need has been defined in virtually as many ways as there were writers discussing it. Although each writer may have been explicit in defining need, that single word was inadequate for encompassing all connotations of needfulness. From a review of diverse academic disciplines, patterns in the use of need and related concepts were used to characterize its many attributes. It became important to distinguish between need as a condition of needfulness and needs as those objects, behaviors, or states of being that satisfy needfulness.

Conditions of Need

Need as a human condition was found to be based upon the existence of particular requirements for well being. Regardless of whether those requirements were a person's innate characteristics or were learned through experience, unmet requirements stimulated a condition of need. Need was found to be a condition internal to or within a person that often led to other states of being or behaviors. Need was often characterized as a deficiency to be overcome, a motivating force resulting from deficiencies, or expectancies for goals to be attained. The existence of need was never found to be isolated from other human conditions and circumstances, except in academic analysis. Need was constantly in a state of interaction with the needful party's values, health, experience, environment, and other characteristics.

As basic and applied behavioral, health, and social sciences attempt to comprehend and serve human needfulness, greater clarity is required in the use of the guiding concept. While each life science area's conception of need may vary from the others, the conceptions themselves should be clear. Otherwise, the provision of need-resolving efforts might never serve the needs they were supposedly based upon.

The complexity of the basic conditions of need must be recognized as the "real needs" of "real people" are being addressed. The linkage between needfulness and requirements demands that the strength and validity of the requirements be considered before the value of the need can be determined. The internal nature of need requires considerable care in the perception and interpretation of observable evidence of needfulness. The heavy interaction between needfulness and other personal conditions forces recognition of the complexity of life regardless of how simple solutions to needfulness may appear.

Dynamics of Need

Need was found to be resolved through a sequence of stages hypothesized in psychological terms and applied in many behavioral sciences. Although the stages were internal and not subject to direct observation, their reality and character

were well established. Careful analysis of complex human conditions yeilded a series of constructs which characterize how deficiencies prompt motivating forces to stimulate expectancies and often goal-related behavior. The degree to which requirements were met caused the person to repeat the process in cycle after cycle. Learning was found throughout the process to affect both needfulness and the means by which satisfaction was sought if not found.

The perception of need as a dynamic process rather than a static condition provided a useful explanation of need's complexity and practical opportunities for intervention. As the process is more carefully explicated, the cause and effect of each stage can be better understood. As all stages become more identifiable, efforts to treat needful conditions can become more direct and hopefully more successful. Understanding the role of learning at each stage of the process provides opportunities for influencing both the development and satisfaction of needs. As human service practitioners try to resolve the needs of their constituency, more avenues of providing assistance or preventing undesirable conditions can become apparent.

The stages in the need satisfaction cycle and the sequence of those stages have been hypothesized only recently. Further examination of both literature and the human condition is required to confirm or revise the hypothesized constructs. Particular attention should be directed toward how the cycling of energies actually occurs in life. Additionally, further research should clarify the function of learning throughout the need resolution process.

Dimensions of Need

The manner in which need and related concepts were characterized in literature followed a number of fairly consistent patterns. These patterns were characterized along four distinct dimensions. The sources of need were equated to the sources of the requirements which, if unmet, would stimulate conditions of needfulness. Some requirements arose from internal characteristics or forces while others resulted from experience in the environment. Five types of needs were identified separately and found related to a number of human qualities. The intensity of need was found to range from necessary for survival to simply inconsequential. Further, the intensity of a given need was thought to relate to the individual's circumstance, not the source or type of need. Finally, the social scope of need or its pervasiveness throughout a population was determined to range from individual needs to societal needs.

A number of implications for both research and practice may be drawn from the four dimensions of need. The dimensions provide researchers with an analytic framework for separating or associating different attributes of needfulness. The dimensions provide practitioners with several means for obtaining valuable information for decision making and the planning of preventative or remedial actions.

In examining the source of needs, it is obvious that need stimulation is more complex than simply activating a need related to an already existing requirement. Powerful environmental forces may coerce a person into desiring particular goals (internalizing requirements) and into attempting particular goal achieving behaviors. In effect, needs and goals may not only be elicited but created as well. In our society, artificial or contrived needs are fostered on a wholesale basis. Consequently, the source or stimulus of need should be considered before its importance or urgency are determined. Externally originated needs are probably means-specific. That is, the needs are expressed in terms of need satisfying goals. Internally originated needs are probably ends but not means specific. The need must be satisfied, but a variety of means may be employed to provide satisfaction. Identifying the source of the need (internal vs. environmental) can aid the selection of the appropriate means of satisfying the need.

Different types of needs require different means of satisfaction and perhaps different methods (behaviors) of attaining the respective goals. Identifying the type (or types) of need a person has can be as crucial to providing satisfaction as identifying the source of each need. This is particularly important when several different types of need are operating simultaneously. Interpreting need is difficult, but satisfying someone's needs without an accurate appraisal of the types of needs is even more difficult.

It is important to recognize that although needs can be differentiated, their differentiation does not imply any sense of hierarchy or prepotency among them. The type(s) of needs most critical to a given person in a given moment in a given situation in a given culture may not be (or, are probably not) the same for the same or another person in different circumstances.

The intensity of need then becomes another critical aspect of needfulness, particularly during the allocation of energy or resources to satisfy needs. Regardless of the type of need being addressed, the principle of hierarchy is vitally important to a proper conception of needs. If each individual's needs are indeed ordered by their potency or importance, the person or institution which seeks to satisfy particular needs should understand how the target need fits into the individual's need hierarchy. Overestimating the importance of a target need could result in a fruitless waste of program resources. Successfully meeting the needs of a population requires not only identifying the source and type of need, but its relative intensity as well.

Identifying the social scope of need is valuable for explaining the nature of target needs. Different methods of satisfying needs are required for different size populations. The extent to which a certain need exists among a population can also influence the priority given to programs for meeting the need. The social scope of need should be considered along with the other three dimensions of need as services are being planned to respond to human needfulness.

The four dimensions of need are certainly subject to review and further research. The structure and dynamics of each dimension should be examined

carefully. (a) For source of need, the process of internalizing environment-originated requirements should be investigated. The intervention of personal and situational characteristics in the process would be important to understand. The role and process of learning in the internalization of requirements should be determined. (b) For types of need, the accuracy and completeness of the typology should be determined. Means of identifying and characterizing each type of need should be developed. (c) For intensity of need, terminology for characterizing the extent of needfulness should be clarified. Many common terms (for example, interests, expectancies, desires, aspirations, wants, and demand) are succeptable to broad interpretation. "Demand," for example might imply greater need than "interest," but might also imply only a greater purchasing ability. In addition to more descriptive concepts, the independence of intensity from type of need should be firmly established. (d) For social scope of need, differences and relationships among individual and group needs should be examined. Individual and group needs should be analyzed to determine whether and how collective group needs are different than the sum of individual member needs. The way in which need at each level affects elements of other levels should also be investigated (e.g., how societal-level needs affect individuals, or how individual needs affect institutional needs).

Comprehensive Definition of Need

The complexity of the concept of need and the various ways it can be used or misused made the development of a comprehensive definition quite difficult. A review of many representative definitions found a range of special emphases among the definitions. Most definitions emphasized a deficiency that caused a needful condition, the motivating effects of a needful condition, or the goal that was thought to be needed. Simply choosing a "good" definition from the literature was not particularly successful because each writer had some special perception of it.

Need had been perceived by persons possessing it as a driving force (often termed "felt" need) or "articulated" need). Needs perceived by observers were termed "ascribed" needs. Needs derived from requirements based solely on externally imposed values or requirements were termed "prescribed" needs.

An ideal definition of human need (at least for this writer) could be applied consistently in many areas of human service. In education, for example, it would make possible an accurate description of the educational needs of a target population and the successful development of some educational services in response. The type of information suggested by the definition to identify population needs should characterize those needs objectively within their social context. The information should also be of a quality which would promote the development and evaluation of successful educational services.

Such an ideal definition would have to meet at least five criteria. It would have to describe need as a state of being that is internal to the persons having it, not as a factor outside of them. Need would have to be defined with appropriate specificity in terms of several factors: requirements, deficiencies, tensions, motives, and goals. The definition would have to establish that an actual state of needfulness existed. The need would have to be measurable in order that appropriate programs could be designed and evaluated. The definition should also reflect the personal quality of a needful condition.

A comprehensive definition which generally meets all criteria can be synthesized from literature: Need is a motivating, goal-oriented internal state of tension or dissatisfaction based on a real discrepancy between current conditions and the preferred conditions appropriately required by the person having need.

The best test of the adequacy of the definition would be to operationalize it in a given field of practice. It it were adapted to define educational needs, it must serve to describe those needs from the viewpoints of both the learner and the educator. (It is important to recognize that while the two viewpoints are complementary, they are also different.)

To define educational needs from the learner's viewpoint, only the terms "current conditions" and "preferred conditions" must be changed. "Skills," "competencies," "capabilities," etc. can be substituted for "conditions" and the definition is complete. The choice of substitutions should be controlled by the nature of the educational needs under consideration.

> Educational need is a motivating, goal-oriented internal state of tension or dissatisfaction based on a real discrepancy between current capabilities and the preferred capabilities appropriately required by the person having need.

Adapting the definition to serve an educational planner's viewpoint is a similar process, although it requires the application of some assumptions and hypotheses. Based upon our understanding (by assumption or hypothesis) of how learned competencies and performance outcomes can indicate or measure educational needs, the definition can serve institutional veiwpoints as well as learner viewpoints. When educational system planners such as Kaufman speak of needs in terms of outcomes, they are already employing theory which translates desirable learner goals (on a general level) into instructional design performance results (on a specific level). The results of performance (outcomes) are the units of measuring the skills, competencies, and abilities of learners. Using these theoretical relationships, learner-oriented educational conditions can easily be translated into institution-oriented measurable outcomes.

> Educational need is a motivating, goal-oriented internal state of tension or dissatisfaction based on a real and measurable discrepancy between current performance capabilities and the required performance capabilities appropriately required by the person having need.

Summary. This analysis of the concept of need has provided a number of conceptual tools for building more accurate characterizations of human needfulness. Based upon several conditions, the need resolution process was found to involve several stages of biological, psychological, and perhaps emotional activities. The satisfaction of need was shown to prompt efforts to resolve still other needs. The needs themselves were capable of being characterized according to their source, type, intensity, and social scope. If applied in practice, various need concepts and definitions provided means for improving the analysis of clientele needs and enhancing the utilization and effects of program resources.

While the analysis did characterize need in several ways, it also highlighted the necessity for further investigation of the accuracy and completeness of the literature-based constructs. Related research on the process by which people perceive their own needs or the indicators that reliably characterize need concepts would also be valuable. In seeking to provide answers, the paper also raised many questions. Attention to both answers and questions on the part of human service professionals should benefit both their practice and their constituency.

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